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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2022
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 1532
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0650
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1187
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 1324
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 2381
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3679
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2022
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0827
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 9591
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 1496
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 1578
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE PRIORITY 6651
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY PRIORITY 4905
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH PRIORITY 4916

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000833

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [SOCI](#) [EAID](#) [EUN](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON SRI LANKAN IDPS

REF: STATE 92641

Classified by Pol/Econ Counselor Edgard Kagan for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Pol/Econcouns delivered on September 8 reftel points on freedom of movement for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka to Gary Cowan, Director of the India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives section in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and raised the issue separately with Deborah Stokes, DFAT First Assistant Secretary for South and West Asia, Middle East and Africa.

¶2. (C) According to Cowan, the GOA is increasingly concerned about Sri Lanka and is interested in a donor conference. Foreign Minister Stephen Smith is following Sri Lanka closely, including the issue of IDPs, and plans to visit the country in early 2010. He will likely make a speech on Sri Lanka in the Australian parliament on September 14. (Note: Australia has a substantial ethnic Sri Lankan population - approximately 62,000. End note.) The Australian High Commissioner in Colombo is making another set of rounds this week to reinforce the GOA's concern about IDPs.

¶3. (C) Cowan went on to say that the GOA intends to pursue closer engagement with Sri Lanka through advocacy in Colombo and by refraining from issuing publicly critical statements. Stokes echoed these concerns, stating that there is worry that a more publicly confrontational stance will alienate Sri Lanka and move the country toward closer alignment with "new friends" such as Russia, Pakistan, Iran and China. The GOA will focus on multilateral aid, but will continue to deliver bilateral assistance such as demining. The Australians maintain good cooperation with Sri Lanka on people smuggling and Cowan sees this as an entree to deepen relations.

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